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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8292
INFO RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1211
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0512
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1032
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0957
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0101
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1660
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 0048
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0156
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 0041
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0004
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0093
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0510
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 4763
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHENNAI 000954

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SUBJECT: QUESTIONS ABOUT TAMIL NADU/LTTE CONNECTIONS

REF: CHENNAI 0062

Classified By: Acting Consul General Ravi Candadai. Reason 1.4 (b,d)

11. C) SUMMARY: Despite the fact that Tamil Nadu is home to the largest population of Tamils in the world, there is virtually no support in the state for the LTTE. There is no financial support coming from the state, no significant supplies flowing from Tamil Nadu to the LTTE, and almost no public sentiment in support of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu. END SUMMARY

IS TAMIL NADU A SOURCE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LTTE?

12. (C) All the sources with whom Post has discussed this issue, including law enforcement officials, say that Tamils in Tamil Nadu and the relative few Tamils who live elsewhere in India, are not a source of financial support for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This was not always the case, however. Prior to the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi by an LTTE terrorist in 1991, there was significant support for the LTTE cause in the state that likely included financial support. But support for the LTTE cause vanished almost overnight after Rajiv Gandhi's death. It may be, however, that some financial support flows the other way, that is, from the LTTE to certain political leaders in Tamil Nadu, notably Vaiko, founder and General Secretary of the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK). Some people, including Tamil refugee NGO leader Chandrahasan, believe that the LTTE provided initial financial support for Vaiko in establishing his MDMK party after he split from the DMK party in 1993. Vaiko has been an outspoken supporter of the LTTE but any financial link remains unproven (Reftel).

WHERE DOES FINANCIAL SUPPORT COME FROM?

13. (C) Post's contacts suggest that substantial financial support for the LTTE comes from Tamils in

other countries, notably Canada, the United Kingdom, Netherlands and Germany. Each of these countries has a significant Tamil population. Some sources suggest that Tamils in these countries are encouraged to give up to 10 percent of their income to support the LTTE cause. This encouragement, which may be closer to extortion, is often administered through local religious institutions or Tamil cultural organizations in these countries.

DOES LTTE RECEIVE ARMS AND SUPPLIES FROM TAMIL NADU?

14. (C) Reftel explained the firm line that the Tamil Nadu government under former Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa took against LTTE elements in the state. Post expects the newly elected DMK government to continue that tough anti-LTTE policy. The expectation is based on the DMK's record in controlling the LTTE when it was last in power from 1996 to 2001. Outgoing Director General of Police AX Alexander told Post with confidence that no arms were flowing from Tamil Nadu to the LTTE. He said that a few small items like medicines, diesel, gasoline, and motorcycle tires are sometimes smuggled from Tamil Nadu to the island in small boats but nothing of consequence. Alexander and others have suggested that arms reach the LTTE from three primary sources: Thailand, Burma, and captured arms from Sri Lankan government forces.

WHAT IS THE VIEW OF THE AVERAGE PERSON IN TAMIL NADU?

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15. (C) To the average person in Tamil Nadu, the situation in Sri Lanka is not a primary interest. In a pre-election interview, Tamil Nadu journalist and political commentator Cho Ramaswamy told Post that people care about their economic problems and not the LTTE or the fight for Eelam. Based on the total lack of discussion of the issue during the campaign and even the lack of local news coverage about conditions on the island, he appears to be right. If there were to be a major human rights violation against Tamils in Sri Lanka or a huge influx of new refugees into Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka, the public's interest might increase but in the absence of such a major event, public interest in the LTTE and the Sri Lanka situation is likely to remain low.

NO SUPPORT FOR LTTE IN TAMIL NADU AND NONE LIKELY

16. (C) COMMENT: It may seem strange that in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, which literally means Tamil country, there is so little support for the LTTE, an organization that professes to be dedicated to establishing a homeland for all Tamils. But the situation today can be directly traced to the day in May 1991, when an LTTE suicide bomber terrorist killed Rajiv Gandhi here in Tamil Nadu. Opinion instantly turned against the LTTE and their tactics. Dravidian political parties that had been supportive of the LTTE in the past fell silent in their support and later stepped up efforts to rid the state of any remnants of LTTE activity. That anti-LTTE sentiment remains today and is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. END
COMMENT

